(b) whether the Prime Minister's package has been implemented; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to make the farmers free from debt all over the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) State Government of Maharashtra has reported reduction in the number of suicide by farmers during 2007 compared to previous year in the Vidarbha region of the State.

(b) The Prime Minister's package is under implementation.

(c) The Government of India constituted an Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Prof. Radhakrishna, Director, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai, to look into the problems of Agricultural Indebtedness in its totality and to suggest measures to provide relief to farmers across the country. The Expert Group has submitted its report to the Government in July, 2007 and the government has initiated the process of consultation on its recommendations.

Crop loss

17. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether an estimate of the losses caused to crops in the northern region of the country during 2006-07 due to winter heavy rains and hailstorms has been made;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(c) the central assistances, if any, given to States, to compensate the affected farmers, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The Governments of Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh reported damage to crops due to rains and hailstorms during February and March, 2007.

(b) State-wise details of crop area affected, as reported by the States/as per available information, is indicated below:

State	Crop area affected
Haryana	5.78 lakh acres
Madhya Pradesh	1.74 lakh hectares
Punjab	2.15 lakh acres
Rajasthan	2.85 lakh hectares
Uttarakhand	1.54 lakh hectares
Uttar Pradesh	4.12 lakh hectares

(c) It is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments concerned to take necessary measures in the wake of natural calamities including hailstorm. There is ready

availability of funds with the States under Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) to take necessary measures. Additional assistance, over the above CRF, is considered from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF), if necessary, for natural calamities of severe nature, in accordance with an established procedure, on submisison of a Memorandum for assistance from the NCCF by the State Government. The Government of Haryana had submitted a Memorandum seeking assistance from the NCCF, in the wake of hailstorm. However, it was assessed that the requirements, as per norms, could be met from the funds available in the CRF and the State Government have been advised accordingly. No other State Government mentioned above submitted any Memorandum for assistance from the NCCF in the wake of hailstorms of February/March, 2007.

Per capita availability of foodgrains

†18. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the food security crisis in the country is getting intensified at present;

(b) if so, whether it is also that per capita availability of foodgrain in the country was 192 grams during 1991 to 1995 which has reduced to 174 grams during 2004-07;

(c) if not, the facts in this regard; and

(d) the target fixed by Government to increase the per capita availability of the foodgrains for ensuing years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) India's food security system is acknowledged to be one of the largest in the world. Total foodgrains production in the country increased from 208.60 million tonnes in 2005-06 to 216.13 million tonnes (Fourth Advance Estimates) in 2006-07.

(b) and (c) The country's per capita availability of foodgrains has been fluctuating over a period of time, as may be seen from the following table:

(Kilogram per year)

Year	Per Capita Availability of Foodgrains
1991	186.2
1992	171.1
1993	169.4
1994	172.0
1995	180.8
1996	173.5
1997	183.6

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi